

May 3, 2017

Dear Member of Congress:

The undersigned organizations join together to ask you to co-sponsor the Agricultural Worker Program Act of 2017. This bill provides a one-time opportunity for experienced agricultural workers to apply for legal status if they show consistent employment in US agriculture and meet other criteria. This bill is a bridge until comprehensive reform can be enacted and will provide desperately needed legal status for farmworkers to stabilize the agricultural economy.

The legislation reflects the farmworker legalization program found in the comprehensive immigration reform package in 2013. The legislation does not include changes to the H-2A program as those should be solved in the context of comprehensive reform.

During a time when President Trump has declared open season on immigrants and Attorney General Sessions has put the power of the Justice Department behind the deportation machinery, we need to take bold steps to protect farmworkers. As experienced in agricultural communities across the U.S., the impact of President Trump's immigration enforcement in agriculture is dire. Farmworkers make easy enforcement targets, resulting not only in increased fear and vulnerability for farmworkers but also in disruptions to agricultural production.

This bill sends a clear signal that there are leaders in Congress ready to engage constructively on immigration and to move beyond policy by soundbite. The Agricultural Worker Program Act of 2017 would help ensure a stable, legal workforce in agriculture, to the benefit of farmworkers, employers, consumers and the national interest. We encourage you to sponsor this legislation and join this important effort to protect those who put food on our tables and without whom our agricultural system would be laid to waste.

Sincerely,

Alianza Americas  
America's Voice  
American GI Forum  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC  
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs  
Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network.  
CATA - The Farmworkers' Support Committee (NJ, PA, MD, DE)  
Center for American Progress  
Church World Service  
Committee for Social Justice (NY)  
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI)  
East Coast Migrant Head Start Project  
Farm Labor Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO  
Farmworker Association of Florida  
Farmworker Justice  
GreenLatinos

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)  
Hispanic Federation  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
La Union Del Pueblo Entero (LUPE)  
LatinoJustice PRLDEF  
MAFO, Inc.  
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)  
League of United Latin American Citizens  
Mexican American Legal Defense & Educational Fund (MALDEF)  
National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives  
National Association of Hispanic Publications (NAHP)  
National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures  
National Council of La Raza  
National Latina/o Psychological Association  
National Employment Law Project  
National Hispanic Media Coalition  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health (NLIRH)  
National Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Association  
Organizacion en California de Lideres Campesinas, Inc.  
PICO National Network  
Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN)  
Presente.org  
SER-Jobs for Progress National Inc.  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
Student Action with Farmworkers  
UFW Foundation  
United States Hispanic Leadership Institute (USHLI)  
United Migrant Opportunity Services/UMOS Inc.  
United Farm Workers  
United We Dream  
U.S.- Mexico Foundation  
We Are Casa  
William C. Velasquez Institute (WCVI)  
Worker Justice Center of NY